



September QNM Recap

MIBFN's September 21st Quarterly Network Meeting (QNM) focused on systems-level work to "change the system, not the mother" in Bay City, Michigan. In collaboration with the [Bay Area Breastfeeding Coalition](#), [Midland Breastfeeding Coalition](#), and Saginaw Breastfeeding Coalition, 45 attendees from 10 counties around the state had a chance to [#learnshareconnect](#) on issues of importance for breastfeeding advocates. Eighty-one percent of mothers in Michigan initiate breastfeeding but face many roadblocks along the way. In order to increase exclusivity and duration rates, all sectors of society, from the workplace to the judicial system, need to normalize and support breastfeeding. Representatives from each of the [three Bay Area coalitions shared](#) the innovative ways they support, protect, and promote breastfeeding in their communities with a variety of support strategies including hospital collaboration, breastfeeding support groups, and community outreach events.

Presentations throughout the day focused on how local communities influence breastfeeding rates and the importance of providing evidence-based breastfeeding care with equitable access to lactation professionals for all families. Presentations on [Breastfeeding and Incarceration](#) and community engagement utilizing the [Coffective System of Training and Tools](#) highlighted the importance of multi-layered support within communities in order to prepare, care, and support families through the breastfeeding relationship even in the face of hardships.

Group activities enabled participants to work together to identify specific organizations in each community to engage in breastfeeding support. Consistent support and breastfeeding messaging across all community partners has a real impact on public health outcomes. How do we engage partners to advance this meaningful work? Sharing information to learn about what's happening around the state and working to implement these same ideas in other communities. The QNM was a great opportunity to learn about breastfeeding roadblocks, share tangible solutions, and connect with other local breastfeeding professionals both in person and on social media.

Join us for our next Quarterly Network Meeting on December 18th from 9am-4pm at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI. Learn more and register for the event at www.mibreastfeeding.org/qnm/.